



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where did the mercury come from?

At this time we don't have an indication of the source of the mercury. That will be a part of the EPA's investigation.

What we do know is that we received a report of a sheen on the Fairmont Park pond, which triggered testing that detected the potential presence of mercury in the pond.

How long has the mercury been in the pond?

There is no way to know at this time how long mercury could have been present in the Fairmont Park Pond. As EPA's and Salt Lake City's investigation continue, we may be able to make a determination.

How bad is it/how big is this issue?

Measures taken by the Salt Lake City to close the pond and waterways at Fairmont Park were conducted September 8th out of an abundance of caution, immediately after the City was notified about the presence of mercury in a sample of water collected from the pond.

The initial sample result indicated a mercury level above regulatory disposal limits, which is a different then an assessment of toxicity for humans or animals. Additional testing and analysis is part of the upcoming EPA investigation.

Salt Lake City requested the EPA's involvement to further assess the pond and surrounding area to determine the appropriate short and long term response. Salt Lake City and EPA are committed to the protection of public health and the environment. The severity and scope of the situation will be determined over the next few days as the investigation continues.

On September 8th, at the request of Salt Lake City, the Salt Lake County Health Department conducted air quality monitoring for the presence of mercury, and did not find any concerning readings in the air.

If it's really bad what does that look like?

It is too early in the investigation to estimate the severity and scope of the situation. EPA will perform further testing and create any remediation plans, if warranted, for the area based on the results of the investigation.

Are residents in danger?

There is no indication at this time that residents in the area or park-goers are in any danger. However, out of an abundance of caution Salt Lake City closed the pond and waterway at the park to the public. Please avoid these waterways, and keep pets away from them.



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When will testing/sampling start? And when will we see results?

On September 8th, a water sample from a Salt Lake City contractor hired to remove a sheen on the pond had a positive mercury result. Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities immediately collected water samples from the pond and outlet of the pond and is anticipating test results by September 10th, if not earlier.

EPA will commence sampling September 9th, and will create a sampling plan with the goal of establishing risk for the area and any geographic boundaries for any possible remediation. The earliest we anticipate seeing the results of sampling is Saturday.

What should people do if they have been in the water or worry they are exposed?

If you are concerned about your health due to your time near the Fairmont Park pond please reach out to your primary care doctor.

Is the whole park closed?

Fairmont Park remains open, however the pond and waterways of the park are closed to the public.

How long will the pond and waterways be closed?

That is dependent on the EPA's findings and plans for any necessary remediation.

What is the water in the pond used for? Drinking?

The pond at Fairmont Park is a spring fed pond that is used for recreational purposes only. It is not a part of the City's drinking water, and it is not used for irrigation at the park.

What is mercury and how dangerous is it?

Mercury is a chemical that can be found throughout the salt lake valley, and can be used in jewelry making, mining, industrial processes, and batteries. Young children are more susceptible to exposure than adults. The human toxicity of mercury is dependent on several factors, including its chemical form, concentration, and length of exposure.

People nearby have gardens. Will there be mercury in their produce?

As with any private garden in the City, proper washing of grown produce is recommended to remove potential substances that may be on the produce's surface.

Are there dead birds/fish?

In the last month there have been 4 birds and two fish found dead at the pond.

However, the cause of these deaths remain unknown because during this time of year there can be issues in the area with avian botulism, which would affect birds, and the water oxygen levels are known to be lower in the fairmont park pond, which could affect fish.



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What if I ate fish from the pond?

If you are concerned about your health due to your time near the Fairmont Park pond please reach out to your primary care doctor.

How is the EPA involved in this?

The EPA was requested by Salt Lake City to perform an evaluation and necessary remediation of any mercury officially found. EPA has authority pursuant to the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act to take the lead to respond to this situation.

What are we doing to protect the unsheltered?

We are working with homeless service providers to communicate to unsheltered people in the area.

How are after school programs in the area being affected?

The Salt Lake County Health Department has reached out to area after school programs to ensure they are in the loop on the issue.

[Response.epa.gov/fairmontpond](https://response.epa.gov/fairmontpond)